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PLAN
OF A
SEMINARY

FOR
THE EDUCATION OF INSTRUCTERS OF YOUTH.

By THOMAS H. GALLAUDET,
Principal of the American Asylum for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb.

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Note.—The following Essays were originally published in the Connecticut Observer, with the signature of "A Father." They are now presented to the consideration of the public by the author, whose professional duties in the Institution with which he is connected, leave him no leisure to attempt any thing in the way of alteration or amendment. His only motive for affixing his name to them is, that possibly a little more interest may, in this way, be excited in their perusal, from the fact, that he has now, for eight years, been engaged in the daily instruction of a class of our fellow beings, whose peculiar and singular condition has afforded him some opportunity of noticing the various modes by which access may be obtained to the youthful mind, in the elementary branches of education. Whatever may be thought of the project which he has ventured to propose, he indulges the hope that these essays, with all their imperfections, may, at least, lead the philanthropist and the Christian to the consideration of the importance of devising *some plans of improvement* in our present system of conducting the education of children and youth.

PLAN OF A SEMINARY

FOR THE

EDUCATION OF INSTRUCTORS OF YOUTH.

No. I.

[To the Editor of the Connecticut Observer.]

SIR—I beg leave, through the medium of your paper, to offer a few hints to the attention of your readers, on the subject of education. My avocations are such, that I have little or no leisure for that composure and arrangement of thought which are so desirable in the presentation of any new and important topic to the consideration of the public. I write in the midst of domestic and professional duties, and I hope this will furnish some apology for the desultory and, perhaps, disconnected manner of my communication. My object, however, will be answered if the few and loose hints which I may suggest, should excite an interest in abler minds, which may enjoy more leisure to devote to a subject, that seems to demand, in this age of benevolent exertion, the earnest attention of every father of a family, or member of our flourishing and happy community.

What is the best mode of instructing our children and youth, in our common schools, in the elementary parts of a good English education?

In answering this question, I shall not, at present, attempt to point out the many and great defects which exist in the prevailing systems of instruction. Perhaps I may notice these, or at least some of them, in a future communication. Nor shall I endeavour to devise the precise mode in which these defects might be remedied. This would require more time and reflection than I have at command; if indeed my feeble powers would be competent to the task. I take it for granted, that many and important improvements may be made in the education of children and youth; my only inquiry now is, In what way can these improvements be the soonest discovered and reduced to practice? All, I presume, will agree with me in yielding assent to this general principle, that no important result can be attained with regard to the accomplishment of any object which affects the temporal or eternal wellbeing of our

species, without enlisting an entire devotedness to it of intelligence, zeal, fidelity, industry, integrity, and practical exertion. What is it, that has furnished us with able divines, lawyers, and physicians? The undivided consecration of the talents and efforts of intelligent and upright individuals to these professions. How have these talents been matured, and these efforts been trained, to their beneficial results? By a long discipline in the *schools of experience*. We have our theological, law, and medical institutions, in which our young men are fitted for the pursuit of these respective professions, by deriving benefit from the various sources of information which libraries, lectures, and experiments afford. Unaided by such auxiliaries, genius, however brilliant; invention, however prolific; observation, however acute; ingenuity, however ready; and perseverance, however indefatigable, have to grope their way, through a long and tiresome process, to the attainment of results which a little acquaintance with the labours of others in the same track of effort, would render a thousand times more easy, rapid, and delightful. *Experience is the storehouse of knowledge.* Now why should not this experience be resorted to as an auxiliary in the education of youth? Why not make this department of human exertion, a *profession*, as well as those of divinity, law, and medicine? Why not have an *Institution for the training up of Instructors* for their sphere of labour, as well as institutions to prepare young men for the duties of the divine, the lawyer, or the physician?

Can a subject of more interest present itself to the consideration of the public? Does not the future improvement of our species, to which the philanthropist and the Christian look forward with such delightful anticipation, depend on the plans which are adopted for the developement and cultivation of the intellectual and moral powers of man? Must not these plans begin with infancy and childhood? What permanent structure can be reared without a solid foundation? Who can make progress in the attainment of any intellectual or moral excellence without *language*, by which to gain knowledge from the experience of others, and to express distinctly his own inquiries, and wants, and doubts? Is not a correct knowledge of his *mother tongue*, the indispensable requisite for a youth's introduction to an acquaintance with other languages, modern and ancient, and to all the sources of literature and science which books contain, or oral instruction can impart? Does not his knowledge of his *mother tongue* depend upon the talents, the fidelity, and the integrity of those by whom he is taught? How will he learn to think, to speak, to read, and to write with accuracy, unless his instructors are able to teach him? Shall their ability depend upon their individual experience and attainments? Are you satisfied with a divine, a lawyer, or a physician, who has qualified himself, or pretended to do so, for his profession, by solitary, unaided, unadvised, untaught, inexperienced efforts? You do not do this.

Why not, then, require in the instructors of youth, to whom you commit the training up of your dear offspring, not only for the business of this short and uncertain life, but for the momentous scenes of eternity, an adequate preparation for their most important and responsible employment?

Suppose, Mr. Editor, an Institution, call it by what name you please, should be established some where in New-England, for the training up of young men for the profession of instructors of youth in the common branches of an English education. Suppose such an institution should be so well endowed, by the liberality of the public, or of individuals, as to have two or three professors, men of talents and habits adapted to the pursuit, who should devote their lives to the object of the "*Theory and Practice of the Education of Youth*," and who should prepare and deliver, and print, if you and they please, a course of lectures on the subject.

Let the Institution be furnished with a *library*, which should contain all the works, theoretical and practical, in all languages, which can be obtained on the subject of education, and also with all the apparatus that modern ingenuity has devised for this purpose; such as maps, charts, globes, orreries, &c. &c.

Let there be connected with the Institution a school, smaller or larger, as circumstances might dictate, of indigent children and youth, and *especially of foreign youth whom we are rearing for future benevolent efforts*, in which the theories of the professors might be reduced to practice, and from which daily experience would derive a thousand useful instructions.

To such an Institution let young men resort, of piety, of talents, of industry, and of adaptedness to the business of the instructors of youth, and who would expect to *devote their lives* to so important an occupation. Let them attend a regular course of lectures on the subject of education; read the best works; take their turns in the instruction of the *experimental school*, and after thus becoming qualified for their office, leave the Institution with a suitable certificate or diploma, recommending them to the confidence of the public.

I have hardly time to allude to the advantages which would result from such a plan.—It would direct the attention, and concentrate the efforts, and inspire the zeal, of many worthy and intelligent minds to *one important* object. They would excite each other in this new career of doing good. Every year would produce a valuable accession to the mass of experience that would be constantly accumulating at such a store-house of knowledge. The business of instructing youth would be reduced to a system, which would embrace the best and the readiest modes of conducting it. This system would be gradually diffused throughout the community. Our instructors would rank as they ought to do, among the most respectable professions. We should know to whom we intrusted

the care and education of our offspring. These instructors, corresponding, as they naturally would, with the Institution which they had left, and visiting it, at its annual, and my imagination already portrays, delightful festivals, would impart to it, and to each other, the discoveries and improvements which they might individually make, in their separate spheres of employment.

In addition to all this, what great advantages such an institution would afford, by the combined talents of its professors, its library, its experimental school, and perhaps by the endowment of two or three fellowships for this very object, for the *formation of the best books to be employed in the early stages of education*; a desideratum, which none but some intelligent mothers, and a few others who have devoted themselves to so humble, yet important an object, can duly appreciate.

Such an Institution, too, would soon become the centre of information on all topics connected with the education of youth; and thus, the combined results of those individuals in domestic life, whose attention has been directed to the subject, would be brought to a point, examined, weighed, matured, digested, systematized, promulgated, and carried into effect.

My plan, Mr. Editor, may appear chimerical. So have many other new projects of doing good. If a better can be devised, or this improved, it will confer great and lasting obligations on

A FATHER.

No. II.

MR. EDITOR,

In my last communication, I stated a few of the advantages which, I thought, would result from the establishment of an Institution, at which, under the direction of suitable Professors, and with the aid of a library and experimental school, young men might be trained to discharge the very important and arduous duties of instructing our children and youth in the common branches of an English education. Permit me to enumerate, very briefly, other benefits which such a plan would be likely to produce.

It would tend to elevate the tone of public sentiment, and to quicken the zeal of public effort with regard to the correct intellectual and moral education of the rising generation.

To accomplish any great object, the co-operation of numbers is necessary. This is emphatically true in our republican community. Individual influence, or wealth, is inadequate to the task. Monarchs, or nobles, may singly devise, and carry into effect, Herculean enterprises. But we have no *royal* institutions; ours must be of more gradual growth, and perhaps, too, may aspire to more generous and impartial beneficence, and attain to more settled and

immoveable stability. Now to concentrate the attention, and interest, and exertions of the public on any important object, it must assume a definite and palpable form. It must have "a local habitation and name." For instance, you may, by statements of facts, and by eloquent appeals to the sympathies of others, excite a good deal of feeling with regard to the deaf and dumb, or to the insane. But so long as you fail to direct this good will in some particular channel of practical effort, you only play round the hearts of those whom you wish to enlist in the cause. They will think, and feel, and talk, and hope that something will be done; but that is all. But erect your Asylum for the deaf and dumb and your Retreat for the insane. Bring these objects of your pity together. Let the public *see* them. Commence your plans of relief. Show that something can be done, and *how* and *where* it can be done, and you bring into action that sympathy and benevolence which would otherwise have been wasted in mere wishes, and hopes, and expectations. Just so with regard to improvements in education. Have an Institution, such as I have ventured to recommend, established. The public attention will be directed to it. Its Professors will have their friends and correspondents in various parts of the country, to whom they will, from time to time, communicate the results of their speculations and efforts, and to whom they will impart a portion of the enthusiasm which they themselves feel. Such an Institution, too, would soon become an object of laudable curiosity. Thousands would visit it. Its experimental school, if properly conducted, would form a most delightful and interesting spectacle. Its library and various apparatus would be, I may say, a novelty in this department of the philosophy of the human mind. It would probably, also, have its public examinations, which would draw together an assembly of intelligent and literary individuals. Its students, as they dispersed through the community, would carry with them the spirit of the Institution, and thus, by these various processes of communication, the whole lump of public sentiment, and feeling, and effort, would be leavened.

Probably, too, the plans of education devised at such an Institution, would, in some of their features, be assailed. So much the better. This very *conflict of opinion* would keep alive the public interest in the general subject. For I have long thought, Mr. Editor, that Providence has wise reasons for forcing *the truth*, in any science, physical, literary, moral, or religious, to fight its way through many a hard struggle. Men are too apt to encumber *this truth*, valuable only when it appears in its native simplicity, with the frivolous appendages of artificial refinements, tending more to gratify the mere pride of metaphysical speculation, than to subserve the cause of real, practical benevolence. When attacked, even if error handles the weapons, the advocates of truth are thus driven to their strong holds, and are obliged to abandon those mere outposts

of idle defence which human ingenuity may have reared, but which the sacred citadel of truth disdains to consider as at all necessary, or even useful to her security.

Men of liberal and expanded views learn a great deal from their antagonists ; and those who should embark in this project of training up a set of instructors to diffuse a uniform system of education throughout our common schools, if possessing the true spirit of improvement, would doubtless be led to correct many of their errors, and to mature successfully many of their plans, by becoming acquainted with the objections and difficulties that would be stated even by their opponents.

Another advantage resulting from such an Institution would be, that it would lead to the investigation and establishment of those *principles of discipline and government* most likely to promote the progress of children and youth in the acquisition of intellectual and moral excellence. How sadly vague and unsettled are all the plans in this most important part of education, now in operation in our common schools ; if, indeed, there are any plans at all. I cannot but hope, the old-fashioned modes of barbarous severity, such as wearing tongs across the neck, and holding heavy weights at the arm's length, are well nigh exploded ; but what is the regular and well-defined system of praise and blame ; of rewards and punishments ; of exciting competition or appealing to better feelings ; in short, of cultivating the moral and religious temper of the pupil, while his intellectual improvement is going on, which now pervades our schools. None, absolutely none. You would scout from this profession the lawyer, the physician, or the divine, who should undertake to provide for the necessities of your estate, your body, or your soul, in so loose and desultory a way. Even the gardener, whom you employ to deck your flower beds, and cultivate your vegetables, and rear your fruit trees, you expect to proceed upon some matured and well understood plan of operation. I can hardly restrain my emotions. I am almost ready to exclaim,—shame on fathers and mothers, that they inquire not at all, that they almost seem to care not at all, with regard to the *moral discipline* that is pursued by instructors in cultivating the temper and disposition of their children. On this subject, every thing depends on the character and habits of the instructor ; on the plans he lays down for himself ; on the modes by which he carries these plans into effect. Here, as in every thing else, *system* is of the highest importance. Nothing should be left to whim and caprice. What is to be this system ? *Who* shall devise it ? Prudence, sagacity, affection, firmness, and above all, *experience*, should combine their skill and effort to produce it. At such an Institution as I have proposed, these requisites would be most likely to be found. Then might we hope to see the heart improved, while the mind was expanded ; and knowledge, human and divine, putting forth its fruits, not by the

mere dint of arbitrary authority, but by the gentler persuasion of motives addressed to those moral principles of our nature, the cultivation of which reason and religion alike inculcate.

No. III.

IN addition to the advantages which have already been stated, of having an Institution established for training up the Instructors of children and youth in our common schools, another of great value deserves to be mentioned. *At such an Institution we might hope, in the course of a few years, to have the best mode devised of imparting moral and religious truth to the youthful mind, and of preparing those elementary books of instruction on this important subject which are yet so much needed.*

I appeal to the experience of fathers and mothers, and teachers, to know whether they have any regular and well-defined system of communicating religious instruction to children; whether they are not much at a loss with regard to the course to be pursued; and whether they have not often wished that their efforts could be guided by the rules of a judicious and enlightened experience. What a diversity of opinions and plans exist, even among truly pious people, on this most important point of training up their offspring for eternity. Introduce conversation on this topic in ever so small a circle of friends, and I will venture to say, that you will find scarcely any two heads of families agreeing in the details of the process of instruction. They aim, to be sure, at the same result, and would wish to be actuated by the same general principles; but the great question is, how these principles are to be carried into effect, and this result to be obtained. It is not my object at present, to enter upon any examination of the various plans, however ingenious, which are pursued by intelligent parents; nor of those crude and heterogeneous modes of religious instruction which exist in many of our common schools; nor to discuss the merits of the different catechisms and books which are employed for this purpose.

I only state, without fear of contradiction, *that no systematic and tried process of leading the infant and youthful mind to the correct understanding of the doctrines and precepts of Divine Truth, exists to any extent among the religious community.* It is only by a slow and patient induction of particular and simple truths, drawn from the most familiar objects, and explained by examples accommodated to the capacity of a child, that he can gradually be brought to understand, and what is of more importance, to feel the force of the sublime and awful doctrines of religion. Your catechisms may be formed by doctors of divinity; they may be ever so correct in sentiment and phraseology; they may contain the very marrow of

orthodoxy ; they may be exceedingly useful at a proper age ; but they do not go into detail ; they are usually couched in terms too general and abstract ; they do not descend to particulars ; they do not afford *illustrative examples* ; they are quite unlike the mode which the best Teacher of religious truth ever on earth took to instruct his illiterate disciples ; in short, in nine cases out of ten, *they cannot be understood by the infant mind.*

Do you wish to make your child *feel* the force of religious truth ? Then enable him, for pity's sake, to comprehend it. What is your process for doing this ? Have you *any process at all* ? Has your pious neighbour *any*, or the instructor to whom you commit, at their tenderest age, your dear and immortal offspring, the precious buds of whose moral faculties are just opening, which you fondly hope and pray, may hereafter put forth the blossoms and bear the fruit of the Paradise of God ? May not such a *process* be devised ? Cannot a devoted attention, and an enlightened judgment, and a disciplined experience, be brought to unite their efforts in so important a work ? Where shall such requisites be found ? Among scattered, and insulated, and ever-changing instructors, many of whom feel but little interest in the subject, and most of whom know as little of its true and difficult nature ; or among fathers and mothers whose time is engrossed by the business of life, and the pressing concerns of providing for the wants and comforts of their families ?—No, Mr. Editor, you must find men whose hearts and minds, and time, shall be devoted to this subject, and then you may hope to have it accomplished. Such would be the men who should be the Professors at the Seminary, the plan of which I have ventured to propose, and the young men who should be educated, under their auspices, to become the instructors of youth.

At such a Seminary, in a short time, we might hope to see matured and laid before the public, a regular and systematic *process* of communicating religious truth to the youthful mind. This process would be gradually diffused, by the young men who should leave the Seminary, throughout the community ; and books developing its details might be prepared for the use of parents and instructors. What a relief this would afford to thousands of fathers and mothers, who ardently desire to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Do not tell me that all this savours too much of refined speculation, and that it could not be reduced to practice. Why not ? Can you teach a child moral and religious truth without going through a certain *process* ? How do you communicate to him, for example, the idea of a God ; in other words, how do you *talk* to him on this subject ; what language do you use ; what illustrations do you give ; what examples do you employ ? Is your mode of doing this the *best* mode ? Do you never find yourself obliged to encounter great difficulties ? Do you think no better mode could be devised ? If you

should devote your whole time and attention to the subject, for a succession of years, could you not make great and important improvements in your *present* mode of instruction? *Could you not describe such improvements to your neighbour, that he might share with you the happy results of your experience?*

This is all very plain and very practical, and it is just what would be the business and duty of the Professors of a Seminary to achieve. It will easily be seen, too, what an advantage they would possess in having their minds directed to *one object*, and in feeling the responsibility of accomplishing that object in the best manner.

And truly, Mr. Editor, if it is not thought to be going too much *into detail*, for men of the finest genius and most elevated talents, to developé, in elaborate treatises, and with the minutest accuracy, the slow and patient *process* by which they have arrived at what the world calls splendid results in those sciences and arts which have *mere matter* as the object of their research, in order that others may understand and pursue the same process; shall it be deemed a too tedious or insignificant employment for some of the benefactors of mankind to ascertain, if possible, and then to communicate to others, a *process* by which the correct knowledge of The Eternal Mind and of the duties which he enjoins may be conveyed to the *immortal minds* which He has formed.

Ah! years are spent, in order to explore the secrets of the mineral world, and to discover the chemical relations which one substance bears to another; and a *single new result* in such pursuits, purchases the meed of renown in the records of philosophy; and shall nothing be done to engage talents and virtue to toil in the *laboratory of the human mind*; to study and arrange its various intellectual and moral phenomena; and to devise the best modes of developing those faculties, and cultivating those powers, which are formed to survive the final wreck of the *material* theatre of its action and employment, and to enter upon the destinies of an existence which is never to end?

No. IV.

I HAVE before hinted at the advantages which would be likely to result from such a Seminary, in the formation of suitable *elementary books of instruction*, for the use of young children, both in families and in common schools. This topic, perhaps, deserves a little further attention. I am fully sensible of the improvements which have been made, within a few years past, in this department of education; and of the great obligations which the public owe to those intelligent and benevolent individuals who have devoted their time and talents to an employment, so apparently humble, and possessing

so few attractions to gratify the taste, and enlist the services of those whose mental acquirements might aspire to far higher efforts in the fields of intellectual labour. But, after all, comparatively little has been done ; and I believe, that every one who has made faithful researches, will acknowledge that a *great proportion* of what are called *children's books*, and even of those which are used in schools, are very imperfectly adapted to the end for which they profess to be designed. Too many of them are mere idle tales ; (for although "Tom Thumb," and "Goody Two Shoes," are getting to be almost out of favour ; yet I could name others, were it not that I feel some reluctance at offending the witty authors who have penned them, of equal nonsense and stupidity, which are yet to be found in our nurseries ;) while those that would seem to aim at a more elevated character, either of instruction or amusement, are sadly deficient in the two grand requisites of such books,—*perspicuity of thought*, and *simplicity of style*.

The fact is, Mr. Editor, if a mother should attempt to *talk* to her children in the manner of sentiment and expression which pervades a vast majority of the books which are prepared for the youthful mind, the little listeners would stand aghast at what they could not comprehend ; and older listeners, if they were present, would esteem it a sad evidence of the want even of common sense, and a miserable exhibition of vanity and bombast. We should *write* for children, as we would *talk* to them ; and this is the great secret of winning their attention, and doing them good.

But I strongly suspect that many a writer of children's books has never dandled one on his knee ; or joined in his little sports ; or prattled with him in his own simple and unaffected style of conversation. He knows not the modes of thinking which the mind pursues ; that is, just opening to the observation of the unknown and mysterious world upon which it has entered ; nor the idioms of that tongue which is just catching the simplest rudiments of so complicated and elaborate a machinery of thought and feeling, as our long and highly cultivated English language possesses. Of course, although his *subject* may be infantile ; yet his *trains of thought*, and *choice of words*, and *modes of illustration*, and *construction of sentences*, may render what he writes altogether unintelligible to the youthful reader. These remarks apply, too, with equal force, to most of the books of instruction which are in use in our common schools. I know there are several of a different character ; but how long must the public wait until the desultory efforts of a few individuals shall have produced a thorough reformation in this respect. But few, if any of these individuals, are devoted to this *single object*. Other pursuits soon engross their attention ; and, in the meanwhile, years, I had almost said ages, must elapse, before these scattered lights of truth will have number and strength sufficient to dispel the gross darkness that broods over almost all the

avenues to the Temple of Science, through which the youthful novitiate has now to grope his blind and devious way.

At such a Seminary as I have proposed, the subject of preparing books for children and schools would be taken up in earnest by men devoted to the object. Its library would furnish them with all the lights that past experience could afford; the experimental schools would be adding a continual stock to this experience; their own ingenuity would be at work, and in the course of time, (for I do not pretend to say that this important object is to be accomplished at once,) we might hope to see issue from this fountain of youthful instruction, a series of school-books, either original or compiled, that would form parts of one regular and well-digested system; and that would be constructed on principles, and written in a style accommodated to the minds of mere learners; and that would develop the various subjects of orthography, elocution, arithmetic, geography, history, grammar, &c. under forms of communication, not clothed with all the technicalities of dry and abstract rules; nor obscured by the mists of a too elevated and subtle phraseology; nor stretching away into the indefiniteness of a generalization, which scarcely the keen of metaphysical acuteness can follow; but plain, palpable, definite, particular, intelligible.

The principles of the immortal Bacon would then exert their auspicious influence, not only upon the loftier spheres of philosophy and science, but upon the humbler, though not less important one of education; and metaphysics, so often censured as wasting her powers in mere speculation, would redeem her character of utility, by showing that her researches into the hidden recesses of mind, may lead to the most rational and successful modes of developing and strengthening its faculties, and of preparing it for honourable and virtuous action in the duties and concerns of life; nay, of training it, under the influence of divine grace, for an endless progress in knowledge, in holiness, and in happiness.

P. S. Since writing the above, Mr. Editor, I have seen certain facts stated by a very respectable Visiting School Committee; a few of which, I deem it not unimportant to mention;—that in some of the schools, under their care, there was a *total want of system* in school-books; that in some cases, the children were permitted to use any books which they or their parents chose; and that in consequence of this, individuals of the same class were furnished with a great variety of different books; that in other cases, the scholars were not furnished with the necessary books of any kind; that in some schools, the selection of books was injudicious, and that in others, the school-books were changed as often as a different instructor took charge of the school.

No. V.

"THE children of this world are wiser, in their generation, than the children of light."—A term of years is required to fulfil the duties of an apprenticeship to any of the mechanical trades. An artisan does not venture to solicit the patronage of the public, till he has undergone this apprenticeship. This training under the instruction of experienced masters, is deemed of still more importance in what are termed the liberal arts, such as painting, sculpture, and engraving. To foster them, academies are formed; models are collected; lectures are delivered; and the young novice is willing to devote years of patient and assiduous labour, to fit himself for success in his profession. We hear, too, of what is termed a regularly-bred merchant; and the drilling of the counter and the counting-house is considered indispensable to prepare one for all the complicated transactions of trade and commerce. And if men are to be trained to arms, academies are established, at which experience, ingenuity, and science are put in requisition, to qualify the young and inexperienced for military exploits. In fact there is scarce any pursuit connected with the business of life, but what men have endeavoured to render successful, by a process predicated on well-known principles of human nature;—by making it, in the first place, a *distinct* profession or calling; then, by yielding to those who have long been engaged in it, the deference which their *experience* justly demands; and finally, by compelling those who would wish to adopt it, to *devote* themselves to it, and to pass through all the *preparatory* steps which are necessary for the consummation of their acquaintance both with its *theory and practice*. In this way *only* we hope to form good mechanics, painters, engravers, sculptors, farmers, merchants, physicians, and lawyers.

Perhaps some of my illustrations may be considered of too humble a kind.—But my subject is a very practical one, and I intend to treat it in a practical way. Permit me, then, Mr. Editor, to inquire of your readers, when they wish to get a *shoe* made, to whom they apply? Do they not take considerable pains to find a *first-rate* workman; one who has learned his trade well, and who can execute his work in the best manner? And when our wives and daughters want a new *bonnet*, or a new *dress*, will they not make a good many inquiries, and take not a few steps, and consume no small portion of very valuable time, to ascertain the important fact, who is the most skilful and tasteful milliner and seamstress within their reach; and are they not willing to undergo many inconveniences, and to wait till their patience is almost exhausted, and their wants very clamorous, in order to obtain the precious satisfaction of having the work done, by hands whose skill and ingenuity have been long tested, and on whose experience and judgment in adjusting

colours, and qualities, and proportions, and symmetry, and shape, they can safely rely?

Is a shoe, or a bonnet, to be put in competition with an immortal mind!

In your very articles of dress, to clothe a frail, perishable body, that is soon to become the prey of corruption, will you be so scrupulous in the choice of those whom you employ to make them; and yet feel no solicitude in requiring of those to whom is intrusted the formation of the habits, and thoughts, and feelings of a soul that is to live for ever, a preparation for their most responsible task; an apprenticeship to their important calling; a devotedness to a pursuit which involves all that can affect the tenderest sympathies of a kind parent,—the most ardent hopes of a true patriot,—the most expanded views of a sincere philanthropist,—the most benevolent wishes of a devout Christian?

I am told that the Patent-office at Washington is thronged with models of machines, intended to facilitate the various processes of mechanical labour; and I read, in our public prints, of the deep interest which is felt in any of those happy discoveries that are made to provide for the wants, and comforts, and luxuries of man, at an easier and a cheaper rate; and I hear them eulogized as the benefactors of our race, whose genius invents, and whose patient application carries into effect any project for winnowing some sheaves of wheat a little quicker, or spinning some threads of cotton a little sooner, or propelling a boat a little faster, than has heretofore been done; and all this while but few, if any, improvements are encouraged, or made, in the process of educating the youthful mind; and in training it for usefulness in this life, and for happiness in the life to come!

Is human ingenuity and skill to be on the alert in almost every other field of enterprise but this? How can we reconcile our apathy on this subject with the duties which we owe to our children, to our country, and to our God?

No. VI.

I BELIEVE, Mr. Editor, that politicians of all parties, and Christians of all denominations, in our country, agree perfectly in one sentiment, that the stability and welfare of our republican institutions, depend upon the diffusion of knowledge among the whole mass of the community; and, that the more complete this diffusion, the firmer will be the basis on which the existence and prosperity of the nation rest. Were I to endeavour, by any train of argument, to establish the truth of this principle, I should deem myself almost offering an affront to the good sense of your readers; I shall therefore, take it for granted, and proceed to show how it applies, with

peculiar force, to the subject, to which in this and some previous essays, I have endeavoured to direct the public attention.

It is important, not only to diffuse general knowledge among our citizens, but to make them acquainted with the *history of our country*; with the nature of its *Federal and State governments*; with the *policy of its measures*, both as regards its internal and external relations; with the duties and qualifications of those *who exercise authority*; and with the rights and duties of those who are *private members of Society*. I do not mean to say, that every one should understand these topics with all the minuteness and accuracy of a statesman; but that *none of our youth* should be suffered to grow up, without *correct general views* of subjects, which so materially affect their individual happiness, and their capacity to act, as they arrive to manhood, with intelligence and wisdom, in the enjoyment of their civil privileges, and the discharge of their civil duties. Besides we have no *hereditary* political sagacity, inherent in a crown, to be transferred to the successive brows which wear it; or *aristocratical* wisdom, beaming from the stars and ribbons of a continued line of nobility; we must look for our future politicians, and statesmen, and heroes, from among the body of the people.

Many, very many, of our most distinguished public characters have risen from the obscurest and humblest walks of life; and, doubtless, thousands of others, of equal promise, have had their talents forever buried in oblivion, merely for the want of proper development and cultivation. In wandering through our village graveyards, I have often felt the force of Gray's beautiful lines;

“Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.”

How necessary, in every point of view, that *politics*, I do not mean the narrow-minded manœuvres of a party struggling for power; but politics, in its generous and liberal sense; embracing those broad outlines of the history of our country which illustrate the causes of its unexampled progress in every thing that concerns a nation's true glory and greatness, and those principles of the organization and administration of government, in which good men of all parties are agreed,—should form an essential part of the education of *every youth* who has the inestimable privilege of being born a citizen of this happy Republic. I would go still farther, and say that it should form *one distinct branch of his education*; that he should be taught, as soon as his mind is capable of understanding the subject, (and he will very soon show, by his inquiries, that he is able to understand a good deal about it,) his rights as a *freeman*, and his duties as a member of the great body politic to which he belongs. Do not tell me that this will make our boys politicians, and train them up for all the angry disputes of party contention.

Quite the contrary. For politicians they *will* become, in spite of all your efforts to prevent it. No subject so excites their curiosity, and rivets their attention, and enlists their feelings. The only question is, from what sources they shall derive their information and their principles; for *both* they will have. And the surest way, in my opinion, Mr. Editor, to protect them against the baneful influence of mere party feeling; to raise them above the contracted views of sectional interests; to enlarge their minds to a just contemplation, and their souls to a lofty embracement of the true ends of government, and the real glory of our country; to form them to be, not the automatical machines that some political juggler will move, to subserve his own selfish designs of wealth or ambition; but discreet, firm, independent *patriots*;—to accomplish so noble a purpose, they should be taught, as early as possible, and by a *process* adapted to the degree of their intelligence, and in *books* prepared for the purpose, all that it concerns them to know on this important topic.

This *process* would be unfolded, and these *books* formed, at such a Seminary as I have proposed. And in this, as in all the other departments of education, to which I have alluded, the instruction of our youth would be conducted on a *systematic plan*, projected by men of wisdom devoted to the object; matured by the aid of concentrated experience; and producing one harmonious and extensive result.

Nor let it be feared, that such a Seminary might, thus, become the engine of a party. It could not, it would not dare to become so. It must *live on public opinion*. The instructors, as they left it, would depend on the public patronage for employment. They could not force themselves upon this patronage. They must deserve it, by their intelligence and their virtue. In fact, their principles, moral, political, and religious, would be far more strictly scrutinized, and much more easily understood, than those of the thousand instructors of our common schools, from whom, at present, no such dangers are feared.

No, Mr. Editor, both interest and duty would lead the Professors at such a seminary, and the instructors who might emanate from it, to discard every thing that savoured of party politics, and party feeling, and to inculcate only those general and magnanimous views of the history and policy of our country, that would recommend themselves to every sincere patriot. Such a Seminary would, indeed, be a powerful engine; but it would be an engine of good; and, under the blessing of that Providence to whom we are indebted for all our political privileges, it would gradually transfuse into the breast of the rising generation, a true love of their common country, and more of the spirit of our venerated WASHINGTON, the peculiar lustre of whose character was, that he thought and acted only for the general welfare.

No. VII.

THE most important branch of my subject, Mr. Editor, yet remains to be considered. It has, I think, too much escaped the attention of the benevolent, that the *education of youth* has a very powerful influence upon the various efforts which are making throughout the world, to diffuse a knowledge of the Gospel, and to bring all mankind within the fold of the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls. I know a great deal has been done in Sunday Schools, and in other ways, to promote the moral and religious improvement of the rising generation ; but, after all, it is on *the adult* that most of the strength of benevolent exertion is expended. For *him*, principally, the sacred ministry discharges its stated duties ; for *him*, Tract Societies, and Missionary Societies, and Bible Societies, and Theological Institutions enkindle their zeal, and prosecute their labours. Far be it from me to disparage or discountenance these exertions. I wish they were increased a thousand fold. But in doing good upon a *large* scale, we may be led to overlook certain very important methods by which it may be done upon a *smaller* one. We may even *waste* some of our labour upon the old trees, because we neglected their culture in their early growth. The farmer understands this fundamental principle of agricultural economy ; and so should the philanthropist and the christian recognise a similar one in their sphere of exertion.

A pastor, settled in the ministry, has charge of a thousand souls. His efforts for their religious welfare are, principally, directed to those of his flock who have arrived to maturity of understanding. His sermons are adapted to their capacity ; for them he holds his occasional religious meetings ; and with them he mingles and converses in the daily intercourse of life. Now it is evident, Mr. Editor, that the religious impressions which he hopes to produce on these *adults*, depend very much, I had almost said entirely, so far as human agency is concerned, on the moral and religious, and I will add, intellectual education which they have received in early life. Will not every pastor bear testimony to the truth of these remarks ? He has to work on materials of all sorts, on minds and characters of every description. The only instrument which he can use is, *Divine Truth*, and the effect of this truth upon the minds and hearts of those to whom it is addressed, depends upon the *peculiar process* of education through which they have passed in their riper years. I mean its effect, so far as means, in his hands, are concerned ; for I know that Divine Grace is still necessary to give efficacy to these means, and that it can even act without them. But the only rule of human effort is, to act as if all depended on the use of these means.

If then the religious education of youth was more faithfully, more thoroughly, and more *systematically* attended to, might we not hope to see *Divine Truth*, through whatever channel of benevolent effort it might be presented, making a readier and more effectual impression upon those of *mature age* who come within the reach of its influence?—Yes, Mr. Editor, I am persuaded, that then the labours of the stated pastor would be crowned with a rich harvest of success, and that he would not have so often to bemoan the barrenness of the soil on which he seems almost to be wasting his fruitless efforts. But why, indeed, ought he to expect this harvest, when the *preparation* of the soil to receive the good seed of the word is so much neglected?

My time, Mr. Editor, will hardly permit me (and I fear, too, the patience of your readers, who may already begin to complain of the length of these essays,) to show the application of the principles contained in the preceding remarks, to all the other departments of benevolent exertion; to the influence of Tract Societies, of Bible Societies, and of Missionary Societies. It is evident, however, that the *one* object of all these exertions, is to affect the mind and heart of men by *Divine Truth*. This Truth is to be addressed to an intelligent, rational, and accountable being. This Truth is *immutable*; its effect, under the blessing of God, depends upon the *state* of the mind to which it is addressed. The state of this mind is not an accidental one; it is the *result*, in a great degree, of the ten thousand influences which affected it in the first stages of its being; of the *process of education* through which it passed in its infancy and youth.

All this cannot be gainsaid without contradicting the known laws of the human mind; and the conclusion is irresistible, that you waste your toil, that you almost labour in vain, to bring about an *entire* reformation of mankind, until you devote a portion, and no small portion too, of your exertions to the moral and religious education of youth.

Do not the daily accounts which we receive from our missionaries abundantly verify the truth of the above remarks? Do they not tell us that their great hope of success lies in the rising generation? Are they not directing more and more of their attention to the formation of schools? They have learned wisdom by experience, and we should be wise, Mr. Editor, to imitate their example. For the principles on which they act are not limited in their application by latitude or longitude; by the ignorance or intelligence, the refinement or rudeness of a people; by states of society or forms of government. They are founded on the nature of man. Neglect them, and nothing but miraculous power can accomplish the renovation of the world. Neglect them, and you may as well abandon the *use of means* altogether.

A correct, well-digested, and systematic process of education, I consider, then, as *one* of the most important *means of grace*. Is this *process* pursued? Where are your devoted and regularly trained *instructors* to carry it on? Where are your *books* of moral and religious instruction formed upon a *plan* by which this *process* can be pursued?

How are these instructors to be reared and these books to be prepared? I may be, as we all are too apt to be, so much engrossed with a favourite project, as to think it is the *only one*, by which a certain good can be accomplished. But permit me, once more, Mr. Editor, to repeat the request, that if this project, of having a Seminary for the education of Instructors of youth, is not the right one; or if it is altogether visionary; or if it is attended with insuperable difficulties; that some of your intelligent readers, and I cannot but hope that there are many who take a deep interest in the subject, would point out a better.

P. S. I congratulate your readers, Mr. Editor, on the very able essays which "A School Visiter" is preparing for your paper. He is so well qualified to discuss the important topic on which he writes, that I am sure he will do an essential benefit to the cause of education, to continue his useful labours. I hope he will not cease writing, until he has fully laid before the public *all the evils* of which he complains. It is surely time that those evils should be exposed, and that while, in Connecticut, we boast so much of the ample provision that is made for the support of common schools, we should be more careful than we are, to see that this provision is faithfully and judiciously applied. Our present system has immense defects. Shall not some remedy be found?

No. VIII.

IN my last essay, Mr. Editor, I considered the religious education of youth, upon a regular and systematic plan, as deserving to be ranked among *the means of grace*. There is one view of this part of my subject which I am about to propose, a little more at length, to the attention of your readers. In doing it, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I mean to advance nothing against the doctrine of the necessity of that *radical change of heart* which the Gospel enjoins, and of that influence of the Holy Spirit, which we are taught in the sacred Scriptures, to consider as the *only efficient cause* of this change. This efficiency is of God; at the same time our duty lies, with a humble dependence on the Divine agency, in the use *all the means* within our reach, to produce salutary impressions of gospel truth upon the human mind. In attempting to do this, we must act according to the known laws of the human

mind ; for if we once depart from this principle, we are in danger of falling into all the extravagances of a wild and uncontrollable enthusiasm. In renewing the heart, God may act without the use of any means ; but in endeavouring to co-operate with Him in this all-important work, we *can* only act through the use of means ;—and these means must be accommodated to the nature of man, as an intelligent, rational, and accountable being.

We wish to enforce divine truth upon the conscience, and to make the heart feel its power. But this truth must be understood. No one would think of converting his hearers by preaching in an unknown tongue. *This truth must be conveyed in language* ; and just in proportion as the hearer is *imperfectly* acquainted with the language used, will his conceptions of divine truth be vague and indistinct.

And this is true, not only with regard to what may be called the *peculiar terms* of Theology, considered as a distinct science, but of *all* the language which is employed ; for our notions of the spiritual world are purely analogical, derived from what we know of our own spirits, by reflection, and of the world which we inhabit, by observation.

He, then, whose mind has been disciplined to the most correct modes of thinking, and who is the most familiarly acquainted with his mother tongue ; who attaches the most distinct ideas to words ; and who comprehends best the construction and power of language ; will be most likely, so far as the understanding is concerned, to receive the readiest and fullest conceptions of divine truth. If it is necessary, on the one hand, that the *preacher* should deliver his message in a plain and perspicuous manner, it is equally so, on the other, that the *hearer* should be thoroughly acquainted with the import of the words and language which are addressed to him.

Now no one, who has arrived to years of maturity, can doubt, that his capacity of correct thinking, and his acquaintance with language, depend almost wholly upon *the process of education* through which he has passed, in these respects, in his early life.

I believe, Mr. Editor, that the teachers of divine truth will bear me witness, that both in the discharge of their public duties, and in their private intercourse with their people, one of the greatest difficulties which they have to encounter is, that they often, after ever so much pains-taking, cannot make themselves understood ; and that in very many instances they are *misunderstood*, when they have flattered themselves that they had used the simplest terms, and expressed their thoughts in the clearest manner. Now this is not always to be attributed to obduracy of heart, nor to obtuseness of intellect ; but to the fact, that the mind of the hearer has not been trained to correct modes of thinking, and that he himself can use language only in a very loose and indefinite way.

The fact is, that nine tenths of mankind, in their conversation

with each other, scarcely ever attach precisely the same ideas to the same words, unless the subject is one of a very simple and familiar kind. This produces, perhaps, no very great inconvenience in the common concerns of life, though, I believe, it is oftener than we are apt to imagine, the fruitful source of a great many of the jealousies and disputes which disturb the peace of society, and of a vast proportion of the scandal which busybodies delight to retail. But when we come to the concerns of the soul; to the awful realities of our eternal destiny; and to the truths of that Revelation, which so awaken our fears, or inspire our hopes, with regard to the future world; and all of which truths we cannot feel *unless we understand them*, and cannot understand them *unless we know the import of the language in which they are conveyed*; it becomes of immense importance, that we should be taught our mother tongue with the most complete accuracy.

I am aware, Mr. Editor, that the popular sentiment on this subject is, that it is very easy to make our children and youth acquainted with their mother tongue; that they will acquire it almost as a matter of course in conversation with others; and that an instructor of very moderate capacity, and of very limited attainments, is abundantly able to teach his little disciples how to read.

But if those with whom children associate use language vaguely and indistinctly, so will *they*; and thus the evil is perpetuated from generation to generation. That an instructor of inferior talents, and little information, may teach a child the *mechanical part of reading*, that is, how to pronounce words correctly, may be true; but it is quite another thing to lead him to attach precise and definite ideas to these words; a task which demands almost as much originality, acuteness, and depth of thought, with as many resources of invention, and powers of analysis, and modes of various and ingenious communication, as are put in requisition in the cultivation or teaching of the most abstract sciences.

Shall this task, on the faithful execution of which we have seen that so much depends,—perhaps, so far as human agency is concerned, the eternal well-being of the soul, be left to those who have few or no qualifications for it?

There are *first principles* in every department, both of science and art; which being neglected, or imperfectly understood, future proficiency is unattainable.

Thus, if a chemist is anxious to lead his pupils to a thorough acquaintance with his science, he is very careful to define his *terms* well at the outset; to make his novitiates familiar with the *language* of chemistry; and to be sure that their notions of its most simple phenomena and laws, are clear and accurate.

Even the artist and mechanic have their appropriate phraseology, which the apprentice must learn before he can hope to make any successful progress in his trade.

And is the sublime science of morals and theology, which also has a language of its own ; which even presses into its service, if I may so speak, *all language* ; unfolding its doctrines, and explaining its precepts, and inculcating its sanctions, by analogies derived from almost all the objects which present themselves to our notice in this lower world, and from almost all the subjects which have engrossed the attention, and commanded the efforts of the great and the learned. Is this divine science to engage our exertions scarcely at all ; that those who are to be the subjects of its instruction in maturer years, should be trained while in early life to a just conception of its *first principles*, and to an accurate acquaintance with that *only medium, language*, through which its important truths can be conveyed ?

Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, wrote thus to the philosopher Aristotle :—" I inform you I have a son ; I thank the gods, not so much for making me a father, as for giving me a son in an age when he can have Aristotle for his instructor. I hope you will make him a successor worthy of me, and a king worthy of Macedonia."

If such were the views of a heathen monarch with regard to his son's advancement in *this world*, what ought to be those of Christian parents, who hope to train up their offspring to become joint-heirs with Christ, of *that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*.

" Now, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."

No. IX.

IN my last essay, Mr. Editor, I endeavoured to show the importance of giving to our children and youth an accurate acquaintance with their *mother tongue*, the English language, even in a moral and religious point of view. I can hardly feel willing to dismiss this part of my subject without a few more reflections, although I am aware that I run no small risk of exhausting the patience of your readers. The little attention, however, which has been paid to this topic, must be my apology, if one is necessary, for the remarks which I have yet to make upon it.

How complex is the machinery of language ; how mighty its power. The tongue of the orator wields the destiny of a nation ; yet the eloquence which he utters, and its effect upon those who hear it, depend upon principles simple as the talk of the nursery, and the thoughts of a little child. Nay, on the same principles, and the proper application of them, by the *process of education*, in the early stages of our instruction, depends all that we know of that awful Being who formed and sustains us, and of the destiny of that

mysterious spirit within us which is to live for ever. For what should we know on these subjects without revelation; and how could God himself, with reverence be it spoken, have made a revelation to us, but in *the language of man*.

No superficial thinker; no half-formed scholar; no one whose mind has not been matured and disciplined by patient reflection, and reading, and study, can teach children language, except in a vague and desultory way. If their correct acquaintance with their mother tongue, then, is of such vast importance, ought not their instructor to be equal to his task? What, it will be said, do you think it necessary to make all youth metaphysicians and linguists?—By no means. My only object is to have them taught to think with clearness and precision, and to attach a definite meaning to the words which they use. If this object is accomplished, or even attended to in any considerable degree in our common schools, I am greatly mistaken.

The usual mode is to refer the child to his dictionary, to learn the import of the words which he does not understand. He spends, too, a great deal of time in committing the *definitions* to memory; and because he can repeat them fluently, he is thought to be making wonderful progress in his knowledge of the English language. Thus he can tell you, that “power,” means “energy, strength, force;” and that “energy,” means “power, strength, force;” and that “strength,” means “power, energy, force.” But ask him to give an example, an application of the *use* of any one of these words, and he is at a complete loss. Hence it is, and for the want of a process of teaching children language or principles in accordance with the known laws of the human mind, that almost all of us arrive so slowly to an accurate knowledge of our own tongue; that we have to correct, as we advance in our literary attainments, so many of the vague and indistinct ideas which we had attached to the meaning of words in early life; that we have to go back again, as it were, to the very elements of thought; and to pursue that simple, analytical mode of discovering truth, even grammatical and philological truth, which, if it had only been adopted in the first stages of our instruction, would have brought our fresh and youthful minds to *the same result*, which now our hoary-headed experience has to toil after, incumbered at every step of its labour, with a load of early erroneous associations.

The fact is, no one can teach language correctly, without a thorough acquaintance with *the philosophy of the human mind*. I do not mean by this, that he must have read all that has been written on this subject, or be familiar with the technicalities of this branch of science. But he must have attentively noticed, accurately analysed, and well understood the operations, affections, and states of *his own mind*. Else how will he comprehend, or be able to teach, the true import of those numerous *intellectual terms* in

language, the explanation of which eventually depends upon our consciousness of what passes within our own minds. He finds these terms referring to the workings of other minds ; but what does he know of *other* minds, only so far as he is acquainted with *his own*.

He may give, perhaps, very subtle and learned definitions of these terms ; but what is this but ringing changes upon words, if he understands not the elements of which his definitions are composed. He may know all the curious points and difficulties of grammatical construction, and talk most profoundly about the agreement and government of words, and explain all the joints which connect sentences together, and all the pivots on which their mechanism turns, and yet be grossly in the dark with regard to the true import of these words, and the exact train of thought which these sentences are intended to convey. Nay, he may *translate* from one language into another with great skill, and even eloquence, and yet be very ignorant of both.

Paradoxical as this latter assertion may seem, it can easily be shown to be true.

A school boy may translate "*Quousque, tandem, abutère, Catilina, patientiâ nostrâ ;*" and tell you very fluently that it means, "*How long, Catiline, wilt thou abuse our patience.*" But are you sure that he knows accurately the import of "*patientia*" in Latin, or "*patience*" in English, or the true meaning of the phrase, "*to abuse patience.*" Question him and see, and perhaps you will find that he is, to say the least, a good deal ignorant of both, and that most of his knowledge consists in ascertaining from his dictionary, that "*abutor*" means "*to abuse,*" and that "*patientia*" means "*patience,*" and that, therefore, "*abutère patientiâ nostrâ,*" *must mean,* "*wilt thou abuse our patience.*"

The fact is, there is a great deal in the mere grammatical structure of language which is purely mechanical ; and, by the help of the definitions in his dictionary, from which he learns what words in English correspond to certain words in another tongue, and of the rules in his grammar, which may explain the dependencies of these words on each other, one may make out what would be called an excellent translation, and still enter very little into the true spirit of the author, and often be quite in the dark with regard to the *idéas* which are intended to be conveyed.

How many *parrot-talkers* there are in the world who, by mingling with those who think before they speak, catch their phraseology, and then, to the amazement of thousands, speak ever so fluently, without the pains of thinking. By the power of imitation, from the force of habit on the principles of association, one may learn to combine words together very dexterously ; and to use high-sounding epithets ; and to model elaborate sentences, wrought up to the highest degree of elegance, and balanced so as to equal the very harmony of music ; and yet neither the author nor the reader

be a whit the wiser for what is written. A very pretty pageant, save that you cannot discover its design. A sort of raree-show, in which the characters concerned are very great (you are told,) but very mysterious personages.

When we consider the importance of language with regard to the education of youth ; and its influence upon all the business and concerns of life ; and its effect upon the intellectual and moral character of man ; and above all, that it is *the only instrument* by which we can obtain a correct understanding of that of *divine revelation*, on which all our knowledge, and hopes, and fears, with regard to our eternal destiny depend ; and that this mighty instrument derives all its force from *a few simple principles* which are developed in the first stages of our being ;—who cannot but lament that so little has yet been done to carry these principles into correct and successful operation, and that children are left to acquire the elements of their mother tongue almost to chance ; or if intrusted to the care of a teacher, that it is deemed quite sufficient if he can lead them to pronounce, and spell, and read correctly ; whereas, then is the very time to imitate the wisdom of the architect, who knows that all his plans of beauty and magnificence depend upon the support of his building, and whose genius, much as it may delight itself in the labours of a grand utility, or the ornaments of a refined taste, does not disdain to stoop to the humbler task of laying the foundation deep and strong.

No. X.

In pursuance, Mr. Editor, of the subject to which some of my late communications have been devoted, permit me to invite the attention of your readers to a few of the causes, which have led, in my opinion, to the neglect of the early education of children in *the true import and correct use of language*. The remarks which I shall offer will apply, also, in a greater or less degree, to all the other elementary branches of their instruction.

Among these causes, *the difficulty of descending to the native simplicity of the subject*, is not the least.

How few persons of well-cultivated minds know how to talk to children. Progress in knowledge depends very much upon the power of generalization ; and this power, after having been long in exercise, begets modes of thinking, and of expression, which are far beyond the reach of the infantile mind, that attends mostly to particulars. “Honesty is the best policy,” is a proverb which we, who have acquired maturity of thought and of language, readily comprehend. But what a number of particulars is involved in this short sentence Follow out the trains of thought which it will, on

a little reflection, produce, and see through what a wide field of actions, and events, and circumstances, they lead. The child's mind must pass through all or some of these trains of thought, before it can arrive at the meaning of the proverb. To excite them by a proper induction of particulars is the difficulty, which, strange as it may seem, even the philosopher is often at a loss how to overcome. To do this, he must, for the moment, lay aside all the loftiness of thought and splendour of imagination, and scope of language, to which he has long been accustomed, and go back to the dawn of his now mighty intellect, and become again the little child :—a task of no easy accomplishment ; a talent which comparatively but few of the higher order of minds possess. And yet we need, at least, *some* such minds to be employed in the education of youth, to reduce the various modes of their instruction to a well-digested system, and to prepare suitable elementary books to carry this system into effect. Indeed, nothing is more essential to the character of a successful instructor, than a genuine simplicity of thought and feeling, with a power of easy and yet correct analysis, both of which are seldom, if ever found, except in a well cultivated and well disciplined mind. How far such requisites exist among the generality of the instructors of youth, I leave to your readers to judge. Few minds, however, I will venture to say, can acquire these requisites, without a *proper training* ; and it is this very training which should form one of the most prominent features of such a Seminary as I have proposed to have established.

This difficulty, too, of descending to the native simplicity of the subject, is, I apprehend, one of the principal reasons, why the numerous defects in the early education of their children at our common schools, have been so strangely overlooked by intelligent parents ; and even still more unobserved by men of literature and science, whose minds have so long been occupied with subjects demanding the exercise of the highest powers of generalization, and of the widest scope of thought and language, that they have quite forgotten, and find it a very difficult task to recall *that simple process* through which they had to pass in their infantile days, in order to acquire the elements of language and of knowledge. They are too apt to think that all is going on well at school, because they do not take the pains, or if they do, have not *the ability*, (I would make the remark with all becoming deference,) to examine and to judge of *the process* which is pursued in the education of their children, and the proficiency which those who are the subjects of this process are making.

And hence it is, that we meet with *some school books* most sadly deficient in perspicuity of thought and simplicity of style, and as poorly calculated as they well can be to advance the little thinker in his correct acquaintance with his mother tongue, receiving the sanction of individuals in the highest ranks of literature and sci-

ence ; an evil which, however limited may be its extent, I deem not unimportant to be mentioned, in order, at least, to show the necessity of caution in giving recommendations to works designed for the instruction of youth, without first submitting them to the test of a patient and faithful examination ; for they may *appear to be very simple* to a mind of the *highest order*, and yet be quite above the reach of a mind of the *lowest order*.

To this intrinsic difficulty of the subject may be added its *apparent lowliness*.

To prattle and play with children, serves very well to fill up a vacant hour ; nay, to the parent it affords one of the sweetest solaces of life.—one which recommends itself to his purest affections with a zest far beyond that which attends any of his pursuits of wealth, of ambition, or of pleasure. It seems almost to carry him back to the primeval freshness of Paradise, and to furnish him with one little spot of moral verdure on which to repose for a few blissful moments from the toils and trials of his pilgrimage through this vale of tears.

But seriously to go to work to devise plans of instructing children and youth, and to exercise all the patience and perseverance which are necessary to carry these plans into effect, seems too humble an employment for those who have long been engaged in the profound labours of science ; the fascinating pleasures of taste ; the elaborate performances of art ; or the weighty business and projects of human affairs.

Hence it is, that, with a few illusrious exceptions, we find minds of the highest order and greatest attainments, rarely condescending to undertake the apparent drudgery of doing any thing in the way of *practical effort* to form and execute plans to digest and prepare books for the elementary instruction of youth. This important business of training up an immortal mind, not only for the various concerns of human life, but for its entrance upon the never-ending course of its existence in the future world, has been too much abandoned by those who would, if they devoted their attention to it, be the best able to conduct it, and left in the hands and under the control of the ignorant, the illiterate, and the undisciplined. Is it not time, Mr. Editor, that more generous views should be entertained ; that such a subject, so pregnant with momentous consequences with regard to every thing that can affect our species in their social or civil capacity, in their temporal or eternal condition should be invested with its proper dignity and importance ; and that it should no longer be deemed beneath the most attentive notice and assiduous exertions of the learned, the wise, the good, and the great.

And in truth, what occupation can be a nobler one, to say nothing of its moral and religious influence, than to analyze the principles of the immortal mind ; to devise and prosecute the best modes of planting and nurturing the seeds of thought ; of cherishing and

unfolding the buds of genius ; of expanding and leading to maturity those intellectual fruits which the frost of death is not to wither, but which are to bloom, undecaying, through the spring-time of eternity.

No. XI.

IN addition, Mr. Editor, to what I observed in my late communication, with regard to the causes which have led to the neglect of the education of children and youth in the true import and correct use of language, permit me to notice the popular objection, that *nature herself has pointed out the best mode ; that art cannot mend it ; that children will take their own way in learning the elements of speech ; and that it does no good to attempt to hasten to maturity what must of necessity be gradual in its growth.*

But you do not leave nature to do her own work. You do not let your children rise to manhood like the forest-tree. You pursue modes of instruction ; you give them the influence of example ; you lead them by the power of imitation to use language as yourselves and others around them use it ; you even go so far as to send them to school at a very early age, if for no other purpose, at least to save yourselves some care and trouble. Now, the true question is, not whether nothing or something shall be done ; but whether *what is done* is susceptible of no improvement.

There is a *mode of teaching children language* ; a very old and universal mode ; you have carelessly adopted it ; are you sure that there cannot be devised a better mode ? Is human invention, which is now astonishing the world with its discoveries in almost every other field of human effort to be considered absolutely impotent and useless in that of education ?

Will fathers take more pains with their grounds than with their children, and devote more time and research to know how to make their orchard-trees yield a few more and fairer apples, than how to train up the "olive-plants which are around their table," to the production of richer and more abundant fruit ! Will philosophers subject *matter* to all possible varieties of forms and combinations, in order to elicit some new process of its motion or action for the temporal benefit of man, and yet neglect to ascertain the principles, and cultivate to their highest degree of improvement the operations, of that *mind* which is the *very agent* to which they are indebted for all the truths which they discover, and all the wonders which they perform !

Statesmen lay the monuments of their glory in cutting canals, that what administers to the bodily wants or comfort of their countrymen may find its way easier and cheaper from one part of the

nation to the other ; and will they leave the fountains of human thought unexplored, and the stream of human intellect in all its earlier course to grope its tardy passage through the thousand obstacles which error, sanctioned by custom, opposes to its broader and deeper tide.

Then we do not act up to the dignity of our nature. We prefer matter to mind ; the body to the soul ; time to eternity.

There is one other cause tending to produce the prevalent low state of improvement in the early education of children, that yet remains to be mentioned ; the desire of accomplishing this object in the most economical way.

A cheap teacher and a large school will do very well for quite young children. As well might you say, that an inferior mason and bad materials are adequate to the laying of that foundation on which you hope to erect a great and permanent edifice. On the contrary, *the very time* to have your children under the care of skilful and accomplished teachers, is when *they are beginning to learn the import and use of language.* For errors committed then will hardly be quite got rid of through life. Their great task, afterwards, will be, not so much to learn as to unlearn ; and perhaps they will have always to lament the vague ideas which they at first attached to language ; the incorrect associations of thought which they formed ; the confused modes of thinking which they adopted ; and the unmeaning or low phraseology which they acquired.

The experience of every one, arrived to mature age, must have convinced him of the truth of these remarks. How thoroughly soever his mind may have been disciplined by study ; and his judgment rendered profound by experience ; and his imagination and taste formed to be classically correct by cultivation ; the impressions of his childhood cling to him with a force, and revive with a freshness, almost irresistible. The old meaning of words which the school-dame taught him, and all her illustrations, and stories, and examples, to render these words intelligible, start up in his remembrance at times when he least expected or wished for them, and influence his thoughts, and perhaps his expressions in spite of himself. It is in mind as in manners ; an awkward trick of childhood is sometimes carried through life ; not to be counteracted by associating with the most refined society, or even by acquiring a simple elegance of deportment.

If these considerations have weight with regard to the intellectual, how much more so with reference to the *moral* character of man. Whatever may be our opinions concerning the moral sense ; how far it is instinctive, or how much it depends on cultivation ; all will agree, that *without instruction* in moral and religious truth, man would be grossly ignorant of his duty. *This instruction must be communicated by language.* Of course it becomes infinitely important that those terms which are used to convey moral and religious ideas

should be well understood. If children are left to attach a false or vague meaning to those terms, who can calculate the influence that it will of necessity have upon all their thoughts and feelings on moral and religious subjects. Nay it goes to form their character through life. The *man* may, by reflection and study, correct the errors of his *head*, which have grown out of the misconceptions of *childhood*; but these misconceptions have already moulded, in a great degree his affections, and desires, and purposes; and he finds it a mighty task to subdue the waywardness of his *heart*.

Permit me to illustrate the truth of these remarks by a familiar example.

A child asks his teacher the meaning of the word, "proper." The teacher, having himself no correct ideas attached to the term, tells the little inquirer, that "proper" means such conduct as he sees in polite and fashionable people.

The parent taking for granted that the boy is making admirable progress at school in the spelling-book, and that he will soon be able to read (that is to *pronounce correctly*) in the bible; and finding, too, that he can even repeat some definitions of very hard words in the dictionary; is at no trouble to ascertain how far he is learning to *think correctly*; whether he attaches true or false ideas to the words which he uses, or in fact, *any ideas at all*. The father, to be sure, talks to him often with affection and earnestness on the importance of his growing up to be a virtuous and useful man, and hopes his conduct will always be *proper*; that is, according to the boy's conception derived from his oracle, the schoolmaster, *that he will act as polite and fashionable people do*. It is quite possible, that these are the very people in the village whose example the father would least wish his son to follow.

What care, what skill, what patience, what ingenuity, what precision ought to be used in teaching children the meaning of such terms, as serve to form, and perhaps to *fix for ever* their impressions with regard to moral and religious truth. Are the character and the talents of those to whom this important task is assigned of little consequence? Is the *cheapness* of the school its highest recommendation? Miserable economy! Guilty neglect of our offspring! We employ, indeed, for trifling wages, those, whom, perhaps, we had better never have employed at all; at the sacrifice, too, of wasting the time, and toil, and patience of our children; and what is still worse, at the risque of their imbibing errors, which no expense or labour can afterwards remove;—a delusion, the folly of which is only equalled by its sad effects.

No. XII.

MOST of the advantages, Mr. Editor, of *such a Seminary*, which have occurred to my mind, have been laid before your readers in the preceding Essays. That they are neither few nor small, I think, no reflecting person can doubt. How they can be obtained in any other way, I cannot conceive. *A great, a general, and a systematic plan of operation* seems to be absolutely necessary, if we hope to achieve any effectual and permanent improvement in the present very defective modes of elementary education. I have been anxiously looking for some *other and better plan* to be proposed, if the one that I have ventured to suggest should appear to be chimerical, or attended with insuperable difficulties. No other plan has yet been offered. It seems to be admitted, that something ought to be done. Shall our feelings be wasted in unavailing regrets? Will *the hardy spirit of New-England* sink before the view of some apparent, or even real, obstacles, in the prosecution of a great and noble object,—the cultivation of the intellectual and moral powers of her rising generation to the highest degree of excellence of which they are susceptible? We must always expect that innovations will produce objections; and that, just in proportion to the extent of any plan for doing good, will the number and the weight of the difficulties with which it has to contend. Such difficulties are a part of the wise dispensations of Providence. They serve to teach us our dependence on His aid. They invigorate our faith. They quicken our zeal. They call into exercise the energy of master-spirits. They lead to circumspection and prudence. In the result, they even contribute to the greater stability and permanency of the designs which they have not had the power to frustrate; as the venerable oak of the forest owes no small part of its towering height, and expansive branches, and deep-struck roots, to the boisterous blasts of heaven which have for years assailed it.

I consider it, therefore, no valid objection to any project of doing good, that it will be attended with great and numerous obstacles.—*The only question is, is it possible to overcome them?*

Let us, then, candidly consider some of the most prominent obstacles in the way of accomplishing the plan which I have proposed, and see if they are absolutely insuperable.

It is feared by some, that it will be impossible ever to produce a sufficient degree of public interest in such a project, to carry it into effect.

I am not so sanguine, Mr. Editor, as to think that the whole mass of the community can, at once, be electrified, as it were, by any appeals, however eloquent, or any efforts, however strenuous, into one deep and universal excitement on this or any other topic. Informa-

tion must be gradually diffused ; the feelings of influential men in various sections of the country must be enlisted ; able writers in our public prints and magazines must engage their hearts and their pens in the cause ; and even our clergy might, without any departure from the appropriate duties of the pulpit, urge upon their hearers the importance of *something's being done*, towards the reformation of the present modes of instructing youth in the elementary branches of education, especially as such a reformation could easily be shown to have an almost incalculable influence upon their eternal welfare.

In addition to all this, suppose that some intelligent and respectable individual, after having made himself master of the subject in all its bearings, and consulted with the wise and judicious, within his reach, who might feel an interest in it, should prepare *a course of lectures*, and spend a season or two, in delivering them in our most populous towns and cities. The novelty of this, if no other cause, would attract a great many hearers. Such an individual, too, in his excursions, would have the best opportunity of conferring with well-informed and influential men ; of gaining their views ; of learning the extent and weight of *all the obstacles* which such a project would have to encounter, and the best modes of removing them ; and, if it should indeed appear deserving of patronage, of enlisting public sentiment and feeling in its favour. At any rate, (and this has been one powerful motive that has induced me, perhaps too rashly, to lay my thoughts even in their crude and imperfect state, before your readers,) should he fail in the *precise object* of his efforts, these efforts would probably lead to some plans, better ones most truly I wish they might be, for improvements in the early education of youth.

But after all, Mr. Editor, I do not deem it, at present, necessary for the commencement of the plan which I have proposed, that any thing like an universal public interest should be taken in it.

If the experiment could, at first, be made upon *a small scale* ; if such an institution could be moderately endowed with funds sufficient to support one or two professors, and procure even the elements of a library, afterwards to be enlarged as private or public bounty might permit ; if it should be established in some town large enough to furnish from its youthful population pupils to form its experimental school ; and if, only a few young men of talents and worth could be induced to resort to it, with an intention of devoting themselves to the business of instruction *as a profession*,—it would not, I think, be long before its practical utility would be demonstrated. The instructors, although few in number, who would, at first, leave the Institution, would probably be located in some of our larger towns. Their modes of instruction would be witnessed by numbers of the influential and intelligent, and if successful, would soon create a demand for other instructors of similar qualifications. And as soon as such a demand should be produced, other individu-

als would be found willing to prepare themselves to meet it. And, thus we might hope that both private and public munificence, so bountifully bestowed, at the present day, on other useful objects, would eventually contribute a portion of its aid to an establishment designed to train up our youth more successfully to derive benefit from *all the other efforts of benevolence, or institutions of literature and religion*, which are so widely extending their influence through every part of our highly favoured country.

I beg leave, too, to remind your readers, that one great advantage which I originally suggested as likely to result from such a Seminary, would be the formation of *useful books of elementary instruction*. Now, as soon as even a few of these could be prepared, should they meet with public patronage, they would speedily find their way into numbers of families and schools. In this channel alone, the proposed Institution would acquire a good degree of notoriety, and exert no small influence upon the feelings and sentiments of the community. In our enlightened country a *popular book* is a most powerful engine of public excitement. An institution that should prove itself capable of preparing ingenious, attractive, intelligible, and instructive works, to be put into the hands of the rising generation, would not have to wait long for a deep and permanent interest in its favour, among the thousands of those who yearn with parental anxiety over the intellectual and moral improvement of the little ones whom Providence has bound to them by such tender and mysterious ties.

No. XIII.

Another obstacle, Mr. Editor, in the prosecution of such a plan, is to induce young men of character and talents to embark in it, and to devote themselves to the business of instruction for life.

I cannot but hope that the time is not far distant, when the education of youth will assume, in the minds of intelligent and pious individuals, its proper place among the various other benevolent exertions which are made, through the aids of private and public bounty, for meliorating the temporal and eternal condition of man. In the meanwhile, cannot a few young men of talents and piety be led to feel that the thousands of our rising generation, the hope of the church and of the state, have strong claims upon their benevolence; and that to consecrate their time and their efforts to such an enterprise, may be as much their duty as to engage in the missionary cause? Missionaries make great sacrifices, and practise much self-denial, and endure weighty labours, without any prospect of temporal emolument, in order to train up *heathen youth* for usefulness in this world, and for happiness in the next; and cannot those be found who will undergo some sacrifices, and self-denial,

and labour, to bring about so great a good, as a reformation in the instruction of those youth who are *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*? Only admit the importance of the object, (and who can deny it?) and it almost looks like an impeachment of their Christian sincerity, to suppose that among those hundreds of young men who are pressing forward into the ranks of charitable enterprise, and who profess to be willing to *endure hardness as faithful soldiers of the cross*, that none can be persuaded to enter upon a domestic field of labour, which promises so much for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. No, Mr. Editor, only let the project be begun; let the way of usefulness be opened; let the countenance and support of even a few pious and influential individuals be afforded; and I am persuaded that agents to carry on the work, at least to commence it, will not be wanting.

The difficulty is not in being unable to procure such agents: it lies deeper; it arises from the very little interest that has yet been taken in the subject; from the strange neglect, among parents, and patriots, and Christians, of a well-digested and systematic plan for the education of children and youth; from the sluggish contentment that is felt with the long established modes of instruction; and from the apprehensions that all improvements are either unsafe or chimerical.

Once rouse this apathy into only the putting forth of a little exertion; and invest the subject with its true dignity and importance; and let it be felt that the church is under the most solemn obligations to feed *the lambs of her flock*; and your young men will come at her bidding, to spend their strength and their days in this delightful service.

But these young men are poor, and cannot defray the expense of a preparatory education at such a Seminary as has been proposed.

Poor young men are taken by the hand of charity, and prepared for other spheres of benevolent exertion;—and shall this wide, and as yet almost uncultivated field of benevolence, be quite neglected, for the want of a little pecuniary aid? Who gave the first impulse to Foreign Missionary efforts? Was nothing done until *the whole Christian public* was awakened to a sense of its duty? Did this mighty enterprise begin in the collected councils of the grave and the venerable fathers of the church? Was the whole plan of operation digested and matured in all its parts, and no steps taken until *all obstacles* were removed, and patronage, and influence, and means collected and concentrated to insure the successful prosecution of the vast design? No, long, long before all this complicated machinery was put in motion, the master-spring was at work, and a few pious and prayerful young men gave an impulse, at first to private zeal, and afterwards to public co-operation, and the result fills us with gratitude and astonishment.

Let a MILLS and his associates arise to a hearty engagedness in

the project of diffusing throughout our country a system for the best mode of conducting the intellectual and religious education of youth ; let their faith be strong, and their perseverance unwavering ; and influence and wealth will soon contribute their share in the prosecution of the work ; and *poverty* on the part of those who are willing to endure *the heat and burden of the day*, will cease to be an obstacle in the way of accomplishing their benevolent designs.

But, Mr. Editor, that Being who can cause "the wrath of man to praise Him," can in this, as in all the other departments of his providential dispensations, make even the selfish passions of our nature contribute to the promotion of good and charitable exertions.

Those who should devote themselves to the business of the instruction of youth *as a profession* ; and who should prepare themselves for it by a course of study and discipline at such a Seminary as I have proposed ; would not find it necessary, as our missionaries do, to depend on the charity of their countrymen for support. Their talents, their qualifications, and their recommendations, would inspire public confidence, and *command public patronage*. For experience would soon prove, if it cannot be now seen in prospect, that *to save time* in the education of youth ; and to have this education *complete* instead of being imperfect ; and to prepare the youthful mind for *accurate thought, and correct feeling, and practical, energetic action, in all the business of life, is to save money* ; and even those who now expend a few dollars with so niggardly a hand, in the education of their dear, immortal offspring, would soon learn how to calculate on the closest principles of loss and gain, in the employment of instructors ; and be willing to give *twice as much* to him who would do his work *twice as well, and in half the time*, as they now give to him who has neither skill nor experience in his profession.

Am I extravagant in these speculations ? I think, Mr. Editor, I am not ; and if your readers will exercise a little more patience, I hope, in a subsequent communication, to show that in adopting the plan which I have proposed, there will be an actual *saving of money* to individuals and to the state, in addition to those numerous advantages in a social, political, and religious point of view, that would result from it, which I have detailed at some length in my preceding essays ; and which are, if I mistake not, so great, that if they could not be attained in any other way, a pecuniary sacrifice ought not for a moment to stand in competition with them.

No. XIV.

I PROPOSE, Mr. Editor, in this communication to show, that by adopting the plan which I have suggested, or *some other*, the tendency of which will be to make the business of the instruction of youth *a profession for life*, and thus to raise the standard of the qualifications of instructors; there will actually be *a saving of money* to individuals and to the public.

My reasoning is founded on two positions which, I think, cannot be controverted; that the present modes of instructing youth are susceptible of vast improvement; and that, if these improvements could be carried into operation, by having a more effectual system of education adopted, and by training up instructors of superior attainments and skill to the majority of those who are now employed in our common schools, there would be a great saving both of time and labour, and of all the contingent expenses necessary to be incurred.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, though I believe it falls short of the truth, that eight years of pretty constant attendance at school, counting from the time that a child begins to learn his letters, is necessary to give him what is called a good English education. I do not fear to hazard the assertion, that under an improved system of education, with suitable books prepared for the purpose, and conducted by more intelligent and experienced instructors, as much would be acquired in *five years*, by our children and youth, as is now acquired in *eight*.

Now with regard to those parents who calculate on receiving benefit from *the labour of their children*, it will easily be seen that, by gaining three years out of eight in the course of their education, there will be an immense saving to the state. This saving alone would, I apprehend, if youth were usefully employed, more than defray the additional wages which would have to be given to instructors of skill and experience, and who should devote themselves to their employment as a profession for life. But if even the advantage to be derived from the labour of children is not taken into the account, it is evident that, for having the same object accomplished in five years that now consumes eight, you could at least afford to pay as much for five years of instruction as you now pay for eight. In addition to this, as it is the custom in many of our country towns for the instructor to board in the families of those who send children to school, there would be a saving also in this respect. There would be a saving too with regard, to all the contingent expenses of the school, such as books, stationery, wood, &c.

continuation of the process begun in the last
 of them on the *quantity* which the agent of the
 and which it also has begun—will, and in some
 way or other, to be the result of the effect of the
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